

## Review: HONKY TONK LAUNDRY at Stages Houston

I tell you what...there's rip-roarin' good time happenin' at The Wishy-Washy!

By: [Jonathan Netek](#) | Jul. 27, 2025



Honky Tonk Laundry finally gets its due, five years after it closed, or rather didn't even open, because of the pandemic. And we are in luck, because most of the original team of actors and production designers are back to bring this celebration of country music divas to the Smith Stage. From creator [Roger Bean](#) this is the perfect show for fans of *Always...Patsy Cline* and *The Marvelous Wonderettes*.

With almost two dozen songs that range from legends like Dolly, Tammy and Loretta to modern day songstresses like [Martina McBride](#), Sara Evans and The Chicks, this show tells the story of Lana Mae, who has inherited The Wishy Washy Washateria from her grandmother. A typical hum-drum day of treating delicates is derailed by Katie, who has just left her cheating boyfriend Brian. After some pharmaceutical comfort, Lana Mae hires Katie to help run the business. The two soon join forces to convert the laundromat into the little town's hottest honky-tonk.

The real joy in this show is watching the real-life take on these country classics that are woven into this story so well. These two women have really taken them and made them their own, infusing their emotions and circumstances, and putting their own vocal spin on them. Country music is made for harmonies and these ladies do not disappoint, whether they are backing each other up or featuring dual belts, they are sumptuous.

[Brooke Wilson](#) plays Lana Mae, the down-trodden co-owner of the Wishy Washy. We learn soon enough that while she's tough as nails she has a heart of gold, and dreams of country stardom. Wilson is fantastic in this role and tackles both ballads and dance hits with equal aplomb. By the second act (which, no spoilers, is a special type of performance) she really shines and commands



the stage like a true pro. The chemistry the two actresses have is beautiful and draws us in immediately.

Holland Vavra as Katie has the opposite journey. She barrels in and is instantly captivating. Act Two finds her a little more apprehensive, but with Lana Mae's (and our) encouragement, she takes the stage by storm and brings the house down. I am a huge fan of Vavra's and this kind

of role is perfect for her. It is especially great in the second act when the fourth wall comes down because her connection with an audience is truly spectacular.

As usual *Stages* transports us through incredible production design. The *Wishy Washy* is wonderfully constructed and feels true to life and super homey. It tells as much of a story as the women who work there. I also appreciate the campy touches like the show curtain of sewn-together shirts and Clorox bottle footlights. I completely understand why, but I would have loved there to be a live band. It did nothing to draw away entertainment from the show, but it was such a great and appreciated addition to *Das Barbecu*.



Women of country music have etched their names in history through their remarkable talent, resilience, and groundbreaking artistry. From early trailblazers who defied expectations in a male-dominated genre, to icons who have fearlessly tackled controversial topics by singing so truthfully about their own experiences. The contributions are undeniable as they've shared stories of love, loss, heartache, and female empowerment, often challenging societal norms and pushing the boundaries of what was considered acceptable, in both life *and* country music.

And that is what this show is, a true celebration of these incredible women who wrote and sung these songs originally. For what it's worth, I was really happy about the inclusion of The Chicks' songs. They are such wonderful storytellers, and hopefully have come out the other end of undeserved cancellation.

Honky Tonk Laundry runs through August 17th on the Lester & Sue Smith Stage at Stages Houston. Performances are Wednesday through Saturday evenings, with matinees on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. The show is two acts, with an intermission, and runs about 2 hours and 15 minutes. More information on the theater and the production can be found [here](#).